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***IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

Date of decision: 12th November, 2018

+ W.P.(C) 3063/2018

MOHAMMED ILYAS ABHA M A Petitioner
Through: Mr. Usman Khan, Adv.

versus

UNION OF INDIA AND ANR. Respondents
Through: Mr. Anil Soni, CGSC with
Mr.Abhinav Tyagi, Adv. for R-1.

CORAM:
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE C.HARI SHANKAR

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J U D G M E N T (O R A L)

1. The petitioner, who is pursuing his Post Graduate Diploma in Management at the Indian Institute of Management, Rohtak, registered for the Scholarship Programme of the Ministry of Minority Affairs, known as the Merit-cum-Means Scholarship Programme.

2. This scholarship programme avowedly is intended for the educational empowerment of six notified Minority Communities i.e. Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain and Parsi. Under the said Scheme, scholarship is awarded to students pursuing technical and professional courses at under graduate and post graduate levels.

3. For the purposes of the present petition, it is not necessary to enter into the specifics of the grants under the said Scheme.

4. Suffice it to state that it is accepted, in the counter affidavit of the respondent, that the IIM, Rohtak is one of the 85 listed institutes eligible for grant to the abovementioned scholarship.

5. It is asserted, in the writ petition, that though the Nodal Officer of the respondent, in Kerala (from where the petitioner hails) communicated, *vide* email dated 9th August, 2017, to the respondent, recommending the case of the petitioner for award of the above mentioned scholarship, stating him to be a meritorious student, the respondent replied, stating that the petitioner's request had been rejected on the ground that the course of the petitioner was not on the list of eligible courses for grant of the abovementioned scholarship.

6. It is admitted, in the counter affidavit of the respondent that this ground, on which the petitioner's request was rejected, was erroneous and that, on verification, the petitioner was treated as a "provisional eligible applicant", subject to verification of his Bank account, which was one of the pre-requisites for disbursement of scholarship under the said Scheme.

7. Subsequently, it appears, the National Scholarship Portal (NSP), which administers the Scheme, sent the Bank details, submitted by the petitioner, to the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) for validation and conformation, so that the scholarship amount could be paid into the designated Bank account of the petitioner.

8. Be it noted that, during the course of the proceedings in this Court, a submission was advanced, by the respondent, on 17th April, 2018, that the petitioner could not be granted scholarship as he had not qualified for such grant on merit, the last candidate who had been granted scholarship having obtained 74%, whereas the petitioner had obtained only 61.63%. This contention was denied by learned counsel for the petitioner, who had submitted that the scholarship was not on merit basis that the available candidates were less than the eligible candidates.

9. Now, the counter-affidavit filed by the respondent discloses that, in fact, the request, of the petitioner, for grant of scholarship, was not rejected on the ground of his merit, but because, while entering his “IFSC Code”, for payment of the scholarship amount, the petitioner had entered “SBTROOOO201” instead of “SBTR0000201”, i.e., in respect of four “0s” he had entered “Os”. In other words, instead of the numeral “0”, the petitioner had entered the capital letter “O”.

10. These appear to be among the hiccups of digitalization, which, hopefully, would be ironed out with the passage of time.

11. Suffice it to state that the above ground can hardly constitute a basis to deny the benefit of scholarship to the petitioner. The counter affidavit makes it clear that denial of scholarship was only on account of his entering the IFSC Code of the Bank and not on merit.

12. Accordingly, the amount of scholarship, to which the petitioner is otherwise entitled, would be paid into his Bank account bearing the IFSC Code “SBTR0000201”. The respondent is directed to do the needful within a period of two weeks.

13. The writ petition stands allowed in the above terms. There shall be no order as to costs.

C. HARI SHANKAR, J.

NOVEMBER 12, 2018

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